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POEMS

POEMS

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BY

MISS BETHAM-EDWARDS

AUTHOR OF "DR. JACOB," "KITTY," "PEARLA," ETC.

LONDON

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1884

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TO

ELLEN DREW BRAYSHER.

As some fond traveller should bring a bride,
Late gained, sole loved, from some sweet southern land,
And half with humbleness and half with pride,
Through homely scenes of youth her footsteps guide,
So, dear, I crave your grace and take your hand,
And pray you wander through the Past with me,
Less able every step to understand
How aught of beauty or delight could be
Reflected in the life that knew not thee!

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LOVE.

A RECOLLECTION.

We loved two poets in that happy time:
We read together—sitting, hand in hand,
Where the rocks cast a shadow on the sand
And sunny waves made echo to the rhyme—
Theocritus of Sicily, who sung
Of many a dusky dryad-haunted grove,
Of shepherds' sorrows and of maidens' love,
In measures sweetest of the sweet Greek tongue;
And Milton, whose blind spirit could conceive
The Paradise no other mortals know,
The grand primeval passion and the woe
Of the first lover Adam and sweet Eve;
And, as we read, we marvelled Love could be
So old, and yet so new to her and me!

THE KISS AND THE STARS.

LIKE twin-stars shining in some spherèd height,
Wé loved each other, and yet dwelt alone ;
My spirit trembled as it met thine own,
Thy beauty's flame did on my soul alight ;
And sweet it seemed in such accord to move
Outside the circle of the loved one's thought,
Till our new-wedded souls were sudden taught
The miracle and majesty of love.
For as those stars, which in their separate sphere
Long round each other with effulgence shine,
Will sudden merge into one world divine ;
So, sweet, our bridal kisses brought us near,
Till we, who just before had breathed apart,
Loved with one soul, one being, and one heart !

OH, GOLDEN HAIR, WHOSE AUREOLE BRINGS!

Oh, golden hair, whose aureole brings
  My life's Aurora like the sun,
At whose approach the woodland sings
  A thousand happy loves in one!—
And all is spring and light once more,
Where only night had been before!

Oh, violet eyes, my heaven, my creed,
  A Paradise entire for me,
In whose calm depths I joyful read
  A sweet and merciful decree!—
Shine on my soul, and let me wait
No longer for my happy fate!

OH, WOULD THAT LOVE COULD DIE!

FOR MUSIC.

OH, would that love could die,
And memories cease to be!
That a foolish kiss and a sigh
Were only a dream to me!

Oh, would that a summer day,
A stroll 'mid the rustling corn,
Could pass from my heart away
Like the mists that melt at morn!

Ah, me, for the starry night,
The glow-worm under the rose,
The talk in the fading light,
Which only one sad heart knows!

Ah me, for the day's surprise!
For the love in a glance that spoke!
The watching of wistful eyes
For the morrow that never broke!

A POOR POET TO HIS LOVE.

WITH THE GIFT OF HIS SONGS.

I CANNOT write for fame, as poets ought ;
And though I love thee, dear, I dare not weave
Thy sweetness with each garland of my thought :
Yet do not o'er my wanton rhymings grieve ;
Assure thy tender heart that I am true,
Even while of other eyes I lightly sing ;
And if I give thee not thy beauty's due,
'Tis that a Poet cannot be a King !
Perhaps, since Love's refrains are ever heard,
These sportive songs of mine may richer prove
Than moulted feathers to some happy bird,
Who builds its little nest and calls its love.
Oh, sweet ! I am not poor ; and if I sigh,
'Tis but to count the building times go by.

LOVE-LETTERS.

I.

I ASKED for praise, and won it from sweet lips ;
But thine, the sweetest lips of all, were still.
Then my heart chid thee, taking silence ill,
Trying, oh, vainest effort ! to eclipse
By other faces thine, the first held dear.
Wert thou less lovely than my fancy wrought ?
Or did I love thee less than first I thought ?
But when, at parting, in thine eyes a tear,
Shy, struggled like a caught bird to get free,
I could not choose, but claimed the tear and thee !

II.

THERE is a covert in the chestnut woods,
Where once we watched the twilight hours flit by ;
No sound disturbed the drowsing earth and sky
But two hearts beating in sweet solitude.

A single star rose; then, unmarked before,
Sang, as for love of it, some passionate bird;
We did not speak, but straightway, as we heard,
My lips met thine. We were alone no more.
Ah, sweet, what trembling twilight woods but miss
That star and bird, that silence and first kiss!

LET ME DREAM!

FOR MUSIC.

LET me dream, let me dream !
Though things be not as they seem.
Footsteps welcome draw anear,
Love's sweet whisper greet my ear ;—
Let me dream, let me dream,
Though things be not as they seem !

Far away the sun-bright land,
Where we wandered hand in hand,
He a god and I a child
Foolish, trusting, fond and wild ;—
Let me dream, let me dream,
Though things be not as they seem !

Leaden grey this northern sky,
Spring will yet come by-and-by;
Snow-bound pines or roses' bloom
Chill not, warm not, Love's cold tomb,—
Let me dream, let me dream,
Though things be not as they seem!

Dreamland, bring my Love to me,
True as once he seemed to be!
Fold me in my lover's arm,
Let me feel his kisses warm;—
Let me dream, let me dream,
Though things be not as they seem!

OH, LOVE, IT CANNOT BE SO LONG AGO!

Oh, love, it cannot be so long ago!
I see the sun slant on the dewy hill;
The white thorn blossoms by the way-side still;
The wood birds are at matins high and low;
I see the hollow where I dropped your hand,
And sighed to count such happy hours go by;—
"A day can be immortal though we die,"
You whispered, and at last I understand.
For us, those woodland hours are ever young,
Those pearly dews still linger on the grass;
The may-buds shed their sweetness as we pass,
The nightingales are singing as they sung,
What have we lost? since feelings pure and deep
Replace the passionate youth we could not keep!

BETROTHAL ON NEW-YEAR'S DAY.

Oh, love! was ever year so well begun
As this, that like a priest snow-robèd stands,—
And knits with holy hands
Two souls, two lives, two beating hearts in one?

Oh, little heart! press closer to my own,
Oh, eloquent still lips! oh, tender eyes!
Oh, sweetest sympathies!
How could I live, and be so long alone?

We sit beside the fire, and silent hear
The snow-storm doing battle in the woods;
And, from far solitudes,
The vanquished trees make wailing sad and drear.

We are too happy to be saddened so,
On this, the day which love hath made divine;
And future spring suns shine
Down on our hearts above the wintry snow.

We both have had our autumn days of rain,
We both have known some sweetness passed away;
But God bestows to-day
A joy that only Death can change to pain.

IRREVOCABLE!

A WOMAN TO HER LOVER.

OH, look into mine eyes, beloved!—true eyes;
No secret from you now until the grave.
Fathom my soul's depths; nothing therein lies
You, any jealous lover, would not have.
Your eyes I should read too, each yesterday
Blotted out by the kiss irrevocable
That made me yours; oh! might I only say—
Forgive, forgive—that made you mine as well,
Mine till we rest apart within the tomb.
Nay, pardon, pardon, let me not accuse,
Your love in days never perhaps to come,
By words such as a love-sick girl might use.
Is love not trust? Your soul I lean upon.
Is love not fealty? Then you must be true.

Is love not union? Therefore we are one,
And only death hath power to make us two.

Were those wild kisses dreams? Ah, no, untold
Their number, yet each seemed in turn to be
A little life that never could grow old,
A little day that dawned for you and me.
Fire burning on the limb its swift impress,
Leaves shorter memory and shorter pain,
Yet were I doomed to ten existences,
So would I love, so be beloved again!

We may not rest together in the tomb.
I may not bear your name. Ah! drop my hand.
Let me not weep, my love. The time hath come
When soul to soul must speak and understand.
Can you be true just as a woman can,
Trust, cling to, and adore, yet dwell apart?
Will not the world because you are a man,
Bound to live in it, wrest you from my heart?
Misjudge me not. No fond unworthy fears
Of other eyes e'er made my soul despair.
I am not crushed because the coming years
Shall set you high and I may not be there.

But oh, beloved, my life hangs on your word!
Answer me true, for I must die or tell
The thought with which my inmost soul is stirred,—
Can love forgive her who has loved too well?
Being a man, you lose not your estate
Because you give your heart, but give no more:
Being a woman, I earn scorn and hate.
Because I ask no pledge, yet dare adore,
Deem me not weak. Oh! could I always look
Into your eyes and read the verdict there,
That passionate appeal I just now spoke
Had never been wrung out of my despair.
But we are parting. Can your spirit keep
Those levels where we now abide as one?
Will the same thoughts of me as pure and deep
Reign in your lonely heart as years go on?
Your aims are wide. Evil will ofttimes wear
The shape of good, and dog a strong man's ways.
Oh, might you feel my proud love ever near!
Oh, could it guide your unillumined days!
When Error seeks you in the guise of Truth,
Fame strives to win you from good men's esteem,
Then think of one who gave her love, her youth,
Yet is not yours except as in a dream.

But what a dream! Love did so cradle me,
As sleeping babe within its mother's arm,
It seemed as if the doom of worlds might be,
And yet, thus sheltered, I could take no harm.
Scant need of vows! we loved, and gave no troth.
Can words add aught to love's mute argument?
Those silent waiting years that came to both
Knew no misgiving, only hope's content.
Then swift awakening! You, my love, my own,
No more belonged to me, to self, to life:
Stern Duty bade you serve your Church alone,
The Church was wedded to you as your wife.
Could I reproach you when your conscience spoke,
Balance together God and human love,
Sweet images of fireside joys invoke,
When calls Divine had reached you from above?
Ah, no! I let you go and murmur not;
Now is no moment for my love to speak,
When I behold you crushed beneath your lot,
Your spirit shaken and your purpose weak.
Let this keen sorrow earthly dross anneal;
Cleanse our dull souls, wrapt in the clay too long;
Memories of me not shame you when you kneel,
Or strive to lift to Heaven the heedless throng.

May not this woman's story, yours and mine,
Teach, nay, rebuke you in your lofty place,
As I for yours, bid you, for Love Divine,
All pride surrender and all self efface?
Oh, love, live nobly! You were born to lead:
Then teach as one whom sorrow hath made wise.
Give to men's waiting souls a loftier creed,
To yearning women worthier destinies:
Why weep for her you leave but not forsake!
Ah! smile, instead. I can bear parting so.
Had you been false, my heart perhaps could break;
But you have done with love, and must be true!

Now we must part. No kiss I do entreat.
Only one look adoring like the rest,
One look that makes your soul mine own to meet,
To haunt me till I die! So it is best.

SECOND LOVE.

THINK not I ever could have loved thee more,
Beloved, or question my deep love for thee;
Even if spring had never gone before,
Could summer sweeter be?

In June the birds their fullest notes have found,
The flowers have turned their faces to the sun,
Each spot of earth becometh jewelled ground
A queen might walk upon.

So in the heart where love hath once abode
Deep as the crystal heaven of thine eyes,
Like altar-fire seeking an unseen God
It burns and purifies.

It makes a temple of a common place;
  It brings a goodness that absolves from sin;
It casts around so heaven-born a grace
  That saints may enter in.

Oh, love, then mayst thou know my love for thee,
  In that I once before have so well loved!
We do not trust our treasure out to sea
  Unless the ship is proved.

And I should never have so prized the rose
  If I had plucked no violet in the spring;
Only the lover of the linnet knows
  How nightingales may sing.

Oh, sweetest blossom of sweet womankind!
  My rose, my love, my flower of all the year!
Oh, come into my heart's great solitude,
  And rest without a fear!

A VALENTINE.

WHAT shall I send my sweet to-day,
When all the woods attune in love?
And I would show the lark and dove,
That I can love as well as they.

I'll send a locket full of hair,—
But no, for it might chance to lie
Too near her heart, and I should die
Of love's sweet envy to be there.

A violet is sweet to give,—
Ah, stay! she'd touch it with her lips,
And, after such complete eclipse,
How could my soul consent to live?

I'll send a kiss, for that would be
  The quickest sent, the lightest borne,
  And well I know to-morrow morn
She'll send it back again to me.

Go, happy winds; ah, do not stay,
  Enamoured of my lady's cheek,
  But hasten home, and I'll bespeak
Your services another day!

THE SPORTSMAN AND THE BIRD.

He kissèd me 'neath the greenwood tree,
Oh, fair the autumn woods to see!

A beauteous bird, no thought of fear,
On lofty oak-branch perched anear.

Then smiled my love, but said no word;
His gun the green leaves hardly stirred;

But like a stone, betwixt him and me,
The bird dropped dead from the neighbouring tree.

"I aim at the heart, and never miss,"
He said, with yet a fonder kiss.

'Twas autumn then, 'tis autumn now,
One sits alone 'neath the self-same bough.

Oh! happy bird, I think and sigh:
My heart he broke—I cannot die!

TO YOUTH.

FOR MUSIC.

UNHAPPY days of youth, farewell!
Let others garlands wind;
Nor youths nor maidens will I tell
That ye have been unkind.

Careless, by whitening hairs I see
That I am growing old;
No silvery tress can trouble me,
As one lost lock of gold!

Since Love hath gone, let Beauty go:
Their spoils have been my pain.
Why should I let the artless know
What 'tis to love in vain?

Let others join in dance or song,
And in the stolen kiss!
Perhaps, oh, Youth, I did thee wrong,
Because I loved amiss!

RECONCILIATION.

OH, sadder than all turmoil after rest,
Is wrench of two fond hearts once close allied!
When every day the little rift grows wide,
Till each dwells far apart as east from west.
No blessed Lethè bring the lagging years,
No subtle poisons the keen anguish numb,
But ever on one theme the lips are dumb,
And ever at one name rise burning tears.
Oh, sweeter than all healing after pain,
Is reconcilement after love estranged!
Nothing is lost though all is somewhat changed,
And peace is throned where discord used to reign.
Life's noon is past, its fitful splendours die;
A lunar rainbow spans the twilight sky!

NATURE.

CHILD'S SUMMER SONG.

A SONG for the summer, a song for me,
Where shall I find my own?
A song that shall speak of innermost glee,
Made for my heart alone?

Oh! where shall I find it? up in the clouds,
Where the sky-lark loves to sing?
Or down by the pool where, in joyous crowds,
Dart wagtails on silvery wing?

The glad ships are skimming the summer sea,
The winds blow soft and fair;
The fishes are dancing about in glee,—
Shall I find what I look for there?

The curious sparrows about the eaves,
Watching me in my play,
Will they not rest 'mid the ivy-leaves,
And teach me what to say ?

And gaily, gaily, the brooklet sings
Down where the rushes grow ;
Oh, fain I would learn all the happy things
He says in his onward flow !

The honey-bees sing the most of all,
As they toil and take no rest ;
Too busy are they to come at my call,
Or hearken to my request.

The woodlands are ringing with happy tales,
All last year's friends I hear :
The chaffinch, the thrush, and the nightingales,
And the little linnets dear ;

Oh, would they but teach me a summer song—
A song for the month of June !
As glad and bright as the day is long,
And set to a joyous tune !

Go, little child, not so far in your quest,
The Prompter you ask is near ;
Seek, like the birds, in your own glad breast,
And sing without halt or fear.

For God, who has sent you the summer days
With joy filled to the brim,
Will place in your heart a song of praise,
A song you can sing to Him !

DYING SUMMER.

HASLEMERE, OCTOBER 3, 1873.

On tawny hills in faded splendours drest,
Of rusty purple and of tarnished gold,
Now like some Eastern monarch, sad and old,
The sovereign summer lieth down to rest!
A mournful mist hangs o'er the mellow plain
And watery meads that mantle pine-clad heights,
And wine-red woods where song no more delights
But only wounded birds cry out in pain.
A pallid glory lingers in the sky,
Faint scents of wilding flowers float on the air;
Birds, flowers, and skies seem asking in despair,
Was Summer crowned so late, so soon to die?
But, with a royal smile, she whispers, "Peace:
Your summer dies—earth's summers do not cease."

THE STUDY WINDOW.

I.—A SUMMER SONG.

WELCOME, welcome, green leaves, so discreetly hiding
Neighbour's prying glances, looks of gossips sidling!
Come once more and screen me with your sunny arras;
Shut out idle pryings, peeps that fret and harass!

Welcome, welcome, green leaves, Nature's airy curtain!
Now indeed I feel alone, privacy is certain;
Veiled my study window from keen looks pursuing,
None but little birds to peer and see what I am doing!

All day long they flutter round this upper storey,
Where my neighbour's chestnuts make a summer glory.
Let them peep, and welcome. Harmless such espying:
Little wiser are they, certes, for all their daily prying!

Welcome, welcome, green leaves, best gifts of the summer!
Hid from quizzing neighbours, now I'm in good humour;
Now the pen moves freely, till October scatters
All my green defences, tears my curtain into tatters.

II.—A WINTER SONG.

SNOW-FLAKES, soft veiling
Window and paling,
Come now to screen me
From eyes watching keenly;
Shut out the neighbours
Eying my labours;
Let none have an inkling
Of what I am thinking,—
If my pen move in languor
Or dash off in anger,
Poetic moods fire me,
Great causes inspire me,—
Let the sparrows only
Watch the student lonely!
Twitter and chatter,
And say, "What's the matter?"

AN AUTUMN SONG.

THE road was long and dreary, and my heart was sore
oppressed,
Yet ever must I hasten on, nor pause for any rest;
For many miles I had to go, and short the autumn day:
But merrily the robins sang to cheer me on my way.

No sunshine lay upon the hills or fields as I passed by;
And pitchy-black the pine-tops showed against the dull
grey sky;
And darkness stretched before me and darkness lay behind:
But ever more the robins sang, and cheered my fainting
mind.

No other birds were singing in the woods or wayside trees;
The wind surged in the branches like the sound of troubled
seas;
So lone was I, so weary, my heart was like to break:
But blithely sang the robins, and it seemed for my sad sake.

How often since, in happier times, more rapturous strains
I've heard,
Of nightingales and thrushes and many a poet's bird,
But all my life that song will seem the sweetest to my ear,
That cheerily the robins sang when all the land was drear!

They sang when first I started, they were singing all the
way,
On black-fringed ash, on holly bough, on birchen, silver
grey;
They made me weep, they made me smile, they made me
hope again,
When joy had died within me and life was only pain.

THE SORREL BLOSSOMS.

In hope I climbed the grassy stair,
Green hill in sunshine glancing;
A thousand grasses blossomed fair,
The breezes set them dancing;
Each seemed a happy soul to be,
Rejoicing with the summer:
I smiled to think they danced for me,
And every glad new-comer.

But ah! a rapture greater still,
Behold, my heart awaited,—
It was the self-same grassy hill,
But wondrously translated!

It seemed that gems had dropped in showers,
The hill with glory lining:
Twas but a crowd of sorrel flowers,
Through which the sun was shining.

Each little flower with ruby wings,
Moved to a rhythmic measure;
Spell-bound, I watched the lovely things,
As one who finds great treasure.
I danced, I sang, I could not choose
But of their brightness borrow;
I felt as if I ne'er could lose
That joy in any sorrow.

Downcast I took the self-same way,
The summer hardly older,
But oh, how different seemed the day,
To me, a sad beholder!
No light lies on the hill-top now,
No music stirs the grasses;
The very insects seem to know
That some great sorrow passes.

I reached at last the flowery place,
Where late I sat in rapture ;
In vain I gazed with wistful face,
No glow could I recapture.
The sorrel flowers were blooming there,
Not one, perhaps, had vanished ;
But oh ! the cloud of my despair
Their grace and joy had banished.

SCALANDS WOOD.

SUMMER IMPROVISATION.

No walls with dusky volumes lined,
  No serried folios shut me in;
No trouble here distracts my mind,
  Of noise without or gloom within;
No message from the world is brought
To break the spell of happy thought.

My fancy is not lightly wooed,
  By pictured scene or marble face,
To dream, in meditative mood,
  Of ancient lore or classic grace;
Nor sword ancestral hangs in sight,
Recalling mediæval knight.

In sage discourse or talk austere
  These summer hours are never spent,

And yet sweet Wisdom dwelleth here,
  And fills me with a sweet content;
Her oracles I seek all day,
Unanswered never go away.

My study is a cool retreat,
  Built lightly in the forest shade;
A mossy carpet for my feet,
  A purple canopy o'erhead.
Here steal the summer hours away,
In sportive toil or earnest play.

'Tis compassed with a pleasant sound,
  Of rustling leaves and murmuring bees,
Of insects humming round and round,
  And squirrels playing in the trees;
Whilst, far and near, the notes are heard
Of many a dear familiar bird.

What need I here I do not find?
  Can any need what is not here?
To lead the fancy, fill the mind,
  The soul lift to a higher sphere,
And that sweet faith make new and strong,
The joy in life whilst life was young!

TWO ENGLISH PICTURES.

I.—THE MIDLANDS IN AUGUST, 1884.

Oh golden world man cannot quite deface!—
His, the great poet's world, marred by our prose;
How the wide landscape amber-tinted glows
Around our train, speeding at arrow's pace!
Now doth some Leeds or Preston, like a blot
On fairest page, shut out the matchless sight—
The midlands, one vast cornfield bathed in light;
Next moment ours once more. Consoling thought,—
Man, the destroyer, devastates, yet leaves
To earth some beauty, and these mellow seas
Of ripened corn just rippling in the breeze.
These sweeps of paly gold and ruddy sheaves
Make up as fair a sight as met the eyes
Of our first parents born to Paradise!

II.—HARVEST AT LUTON.

ST. ANNE'S HILL.

COULD painter, Umbrian or Florentine,
Moved by the fervent piety of old,
Have limned in gold, on ground of lighter gold,
Aught fairer than this English harvest scene?—
Far as the eye can reach, a burnished hill
Of rich ripe corn: above, a twilight sky,
Warm with the mellow tints of Italy;
And on the hill-top, husbandmen who fill
Their wain with sheaves: of solid gold they seem,
Corn, wain, and rustics, whilst around them glows
The pale effulgence. Not a zephyr blows,
And all the world is hushed as in a dream.
Oh, restless English hearts! why do we roam
Blind to such magic of our island home?

RELIGION

THE PRAISE OF LIGHT.

WHO praiseth thee in fittest mood, oh, Light?
Perhaps 'tis he who, while the city sleeps,
Long time a sick man's dreary vigil keeps,
And lonely counts the signs of passing night,—
The dying sound of wheels, the midnight hush,
The according bells of congregated towers,
That chime the round of dusk slow-footed hours;
Till daylight dawns at last, then with a rush
Of glad expectancies, he weeps and prays,
And half he prays to Light and half to God:
"If now indeed I tread the upward road
From unfamiliar death to life's fair ways,
Oh, Lovely Light, let me no longer shame,
By heart unclean or crooked thy sweet name!"

A FAREWELL.

SWEET friends, why do you grieve that I am dying?
Our farewells should be made with smiles, not tears.
I go, and bear no fears
Into the unknown world before me lying.

Since death is but a bridge from earth to heaven,
Linking two worlds, and heaven is most fair;
For we shall gather, there,
Glad harvests of repose after much sin forgiven.

Upon that bridge stand angels waiting for me,
Lost friends who wait with smiles of welcome sweet,
To guide my trembling feet
Into the presence of my Master's glory!

Oh, very radiantly that bright transition
Prophetic breaks upon my wondering mind!
Till all I leave behind
Is shadowed by the splendour of the vision.

Farewell, oh, friends beloved! a glad to-morrow
Treads close upon the footsteps of to-day;
Soon ye shall pass away,
Like me, into a world where friendship hath no sorrow!

CHILDREN'S HYMNS.

I.—HYMN FOR A LITTLE CHILD.

God make my life a little light,
Within the world to glow;
A tiny flame that burneth bright,
Wherever I may go.

God make my life a little flower,
That giveth joy to all,
Content to bloom in native bower,
Although its place be small.

God make my life a little song,
That comforteth the sad;
That helpeth others to be strong,
And makes the singer glad.

God make my life a little staff
Whereon the weak may rest,
That so what health and strength I have
May serve my neighbours best.

God make my life a little hymn
Of tenderness and praise;
Of faith—that never waxeth dim,
In all His wondrous ways.

II.—CHILDREN'S EVENING HYMN.

THE little birds now seek their nest;
The baby sleeps on mother's breast;
Thou givest all Thy children rest,
God of the weary.

The sailor prayeth on the sea;
The little ones at mother's knee;
Now comes the penitent to Thee,
God of the weary.

The orphan puts away his fears;
The troubled hopes for happier years;
Thou driest all the mourner's tears,
God of the weary.

Thou sendest rest to tired feet,
To little toilers slumbers sweet,
To aching hearts repose complete,
God of the weary.

In grief, perplexity, or pain,
None ever come to Thee in vain;
Thou makest life a joy again,
God of the weary.

We sleep that we may wake renewed,
To serve Thee as Thy children should,
With love, and zeal, and gratitude,
God of the weary.

GETHSEMANE.

LIKE Him, whilst friends and brothers slept,
Have we not all heart-broken crept
Into thy shadows once and wept,
Gethsemane ?

We knew not how the day had run,
We only knew that hope was gone,
And fain no more would greet the sun,
Gethsemane !

Our mothers slumbered in the tomb ;
Love, though immortal, could not come
To cheer their children in thy gloom.
Gethsemane !

Not with us was our true help-meet,
Who bore us sons, and made life sweet,
And loved us with a love complete,
Gethsemane!

Not with us might the friend abide,
Who, ever trusty, ever tried,
Fought out Truth's battle by our side,
Gethsemane!

We were alone. The world was still,
The breath of heaven seemed cold and chill;
We beat our breasts and wept our fill,
Gethsemane!

Prone on the ground our limbs were spread,
We wished it were our dying bed,
Since hope and joy and faith had fled,
Gethsemane!

But, late, there broke a little light
Into the darkness of the night,
And we were taught to pray aright,
Gethsemane!

Then Christ Himself said, standing near,
"Oh, fellow-mourner, have no fear!
I weep with thee, and God is here."
Gethsemane!

CONSOLATION.

WHEN the pale wreath is laid upon the tomb,
Love's last fond homage offered to the dead,
And the bereft, with tears and drooping head,
Bid mute farewell on sadly turning home.
Sister and brother, widowed love and friend,
Review, as in a solemn vision there,
Their dear one's life, its bliss and bitter pain,
Its restless hopes now ever at an end.
One common thought lifts them above despair,
One brief thanksgiving is on every tongue:
That faithful heart shall never more be wrung
With cold unkindness or with aching care;
That generous mind no stern rebuffs shall vex;
That busy brain no problems dire perplex.

THE WORK-A-DAY WORLD AND ROMANCE.

THE "GOLDEN BEE."

PART I.

WITH precious merchandise well stored, the growth of Indian soil,
And costly work of Chinese hands, the patient wealth of toil;
Upon the wave with sails outspread, like white-winged bird at sea,
There sped a vessel, homeward bound, the gallant *Golden Bee!*

Huge chests of fragrant tea she had for English social boards,
And rainbow-tinted silks and scarves, and gold and gems in hoards,
Grotesque and dainty ivories, carved by the deftest hands,
For idle money-spenders in rich European lands.

The breeze was fair—the sky serene—the captain's heart was light,
As on the deck he lingered late and watched the coming night:
If sweet a homeward voyage after unpropitious sail,
'Tis sweeter far when Fortune smiles in port and sea and gale.

The captain's manly heart rejoiced, for things had prospered well.
His home on shore he'd reach ere long with much good news to tell;
For Parsee merchants happy news, and for his fair young wife,
Whose sweet affection made the joy and beauty of his life!

Erelong he'd kiss his bonnie boy, and hold him on his knee,
Awhile he'd listen eager-eyed to stories of the sea;
Erelong he'd kiss his latest born, and then the captain smiled,
Smiled, father-like, to think of her, his little unseen child.

A tear ran down his sunburnt cheek, a mild joy lit his eye—
So sweet the thoughts of love and home—so near they seemed to lie ;
His being thrilled with inner joy so sweet and strong and good,
He prayed though uttering not a word, his prayer was understood.

Then one by one rose tremulous each little twinkling star,
And bright and cold Polaris gleamed, that guided from afar :
Alone amid the solitude of starlit sky and sea,
On glided, as a soft-winged bird, the good ship *Golden Bee !*

But hark ! what sudden cry is that of sorrow and affright,
That breaks like tempest unawares the stillness of the night ;
That rouses all from rest and sleep to trouble and dismay ;
That wakes the captain dreaming soft of home so far away ?

Oh, captain, wake ! 'tis but a dream—the harbour is not won ;
Thou dost not clasp thy Mary's hand, nor kiss thy little son ;

Thy baby sweetly sleeps ashore, that shore is far from thee:
Wake, captain, wake, though none but God can save thy
Golden Bee!

"The ship's on fire!" an awful cry to hear on lonely seas,
With double danger in the breath of every favouring breeze;
But calm and ready for the need, the captain gave command,
Imparting strength with every word unto his little band.

For three whole days the vessel burned. Oh! strange it
seemed to be,
Girt round with fires unquenchable upon the pathless sea;
For neither skill nor strength availed: the fatal breezes
blew—
Nearer and nearer came the end to ship and gallant crew.

And all was lost. Those gorgeous silks would sweep no
palace now;
Those ivory fans would never feign a breeze for beauty's
brow;
Those aromatic leaves would soothe no weary student's
brain,
Nor freshen lips in fever heats upon a bed of pain.

"Quick, man the boats! the ship is lost!" at last the captain said,
And no man spoke, but straight and swift the order was obeyed;
Then one by one the crew stepped forth, but all beheld with tears
Their *Golden Bee* deserted, the home of many years.

First had the captain snatched from flame, and placed upon his breast,
A relic of departed days, of all his heart loved best—
A little prayer-book well worn now, a gift in early life,
Sweet token from his only love ere yet he called her wife.

Amid a death-like silentness of breeze and sky and sea,
Beneath a brilliant tropic night they left the *Golden Bee;*
And when they saw the blackened wreck totter amid the wave,
Each sailor breathed a prayer to God, who yet might spare and save.

Then forth upon a lonely sea, six hundred miles from land,
The solitary boats sailed forth with that courageous band;

Sailed forth as drifts a withered leaf upon the surging tide,
With only hope to be their strength, and only God as guide.

No white sail specked the yellow sky, no cloud or shadow came
To cool the canopy of light which seemed to be aflame;
No breeze sprang up to aid their oars, no friendly ray of light
Of distant ship shone forth to guide their dreary way at night.

A fearful thing it was to float and helpless drift away
Upon so vast a wilderness day after weary day;
With meagre stores of food and drink, which ere two days had rolled,
They measured out as never yet a miser did his gold.

"Oh, captain!" cried a sailor boy, "I ran away to sea,
And well I know my mother's heart has sorely grieved for me;
Will some one take my parting love? I shall not reach the shore."
And then he smiled a sad sweet smile, but smiled and spoke no more.

They did not weep, but silent stood, and watched the placid deep:
They thought with wistful hearts of him who slept such blessed sleep;
And one, a gaunt and wasted man, sent forth a helpless cry,
"Master, what boots our further toil?—God save us—or we die!"

"Oh, comrades!" cried the captain, "have we mothers, children, wives?
The thoughts of them must give us all the strength of double lives;
Forget not how the widow's cruse, though wasted, filled again;
We've yet the widow's God o'erhead, and yet a little grain.

"Oh, tender wives who live for us! our hearts consent to take
A little hope, a little faith for your belovèd sake.
Oh, children of our dearest love! oh, pleasant home ashore!
A thousand deaths our souls can brave to call ye ours once more!"

PART II.

Where palaces of merchant kings in marble splendour rise,
And gleam beneath the burning blue of fair Calcutta's skies;
Where orange groves and myrtle boughs perfume the sultry air,
Abode the captain's fair young wife, and watched his coming there.

She never heard the ocean waves or saw a ship at sea,
Without a thought of him who steered the stately *Golden Bee*;
She never kissed her babes at night or woke at dawn of day,
Without a prayer that God would speed her sailor on his way.

Days glided by and brought the time when every ship might be
The one for which her soul grew sick of wistfulness to see;

Till came a morn when hope grew faint within her patient heart,
When every sudden voice or step would make her pale and start.

She held her children to her breast, and prayed without a word
(Ofttimes the breathed unspoken prayer by Heaven is soonest heard);
Or if they heedless played or slept, the passion of her grief
Would spend itself in bitter tears which brought her no relief.

Then, as a calm and peaceful night follows a day of rain,
And drooping plants will feel the sun and ope their leaves again,
For sweetest sake of feeble babes, no helper by, save One,
She learned to lead a widowed life, and say, "Thy will be done!"

One night, when by her bright boy's crib, her baby on her breast,
She sang her evening cradle-song and hushed the pair to rest,

A ship that bore a foreign flag rode calmly with the tide,
And dropt its anchor in the port by the fair city's side.

Before the mother's voice had ceased its singing low and sweet,
A hasty footstep echoed through the silence of the street;
And when the boy's blue dreamy eye sought for her smile no more,
A figure passed the window panes and paused outside the door.

Then came a low-breathed tender voice: it only murmured "Wife!"
And heart to heart the two were clasped, recalled to new glad life.
For hours they hardly spoke a word, but shed calm, blessed tears,
A hymn of thankfulness poured out to One who always hears.

Ofttimes again the captain sped along the ocean ways,
And lived again in memory those fearful shipwrecked days.
Full many a sailor knows the tale, and tells, as told to me,
What hap befell the gallant crew saved from the *Golden Bee.*

THE TWO PROCESSIONS.

Oh, well for my sainted mother, mother of dreams to me!
Oh, well for my sister sweet, who died ere I went to sea!
Well, too, for my brother Jack, they buried with pomp last year,
With martial music playing, and the British flag on his bier!

A sight was that to remember! the like was never seen.
With flowers his coffin was white, and one wreath was sent from the Queen;
Full robed there came the mayor, and the flags were half-mast high;
And every shop was closed as the funeral train wound by.

We wept, my father and I, with sorrow, yet joy and pride!
Fairly earned were these honours, so nobly our Jack had died.

And far and wide was it told how he leapt in the flames to save
One woman more that day from the jaws of a fiery grave.

All said, who beheld the deed, 'twas a thing past words to tell,
He plunged, no thought of self, in the midst of that yawning hell.
They heard him shout, "To the rescue!" above the maddening din,
Crashed underneath, the beams and the red fire sucked him in!

But why do I think of Jack? I am now no brother of his;
My Jack I loved, did he live, would give me no farewell kiss;
Our bones may not rest together, no stone will bear my name—
That name he clothed with glory, and I have brought to shame.

Oh, brother, forgive my crime! Oh, Christ, forgive! I should say.
Just now the chaplain was here, to teach me how to pray;
My brain is crazed with grief, my thoughts are in a whirl:
I murdered a man—for what?—the love of a shameless girl!

No thought had I of sin, when I rose that awful day,
Though she, my wife of a week, was false and had gone away;
They should not have crossed my path, then pride would have mastered hate,
And Kate and her paramour had been left to their wicked fate.

But brazen faced, they met me, and dared me to do my worst;
Can any wonder now that I neither upbraided nor curst?
I turned from the woman in scorn, and quicker than 'tis said,
Full price of his deed he had paid, the love of my wife was dead!

Did I repent me then? Am I penitent quite to-day?
I know not; I only know I gave myself up straightway.
Scant wish had I to live, and welcome death seemed to be,
Until it flashed on my mind, Jack's name would be shamed in me!

I think of the two processions—his funeral train and my own:
He borne to the grave like a prince, the murderer dying alone;
No kinsfolk walking sadly as the bell begins to toll,
The chaplain only by to pray for a dying soul!

And a grave in the prison walls! Oh! could I only lie
Near Jack, in the sweet churchyard, I could better bear to die.
If Christ forgives, would not Jack? Would he not have me there,
Rather than leave me alone in these precincts grim and bare?

Do you hear me cry, oh, brother? my heart is fit to break;
I sinned, I have shamed your name: forgive, for our childhood's sake.
Of Heaven the chaplain speaks: I can only think of *you!*
And fields where we played together in the years so long ago:

I see our pear-tree shedding its fruit in the autumn breeze;
I see the reapers resting at noon 'neath the hawthorn trees;
I hear your merry shout, as we trooped with the lads from school,
The glaring streets along, to our orchard fresh and cool.

It can but be a dream,—this close-barred murderer's cell;
That deed of blood that haunts me; the doom, and the funeral knell?
Last year was it Jack died? Did they bury him as I say?
For me indeed are they raising yon ghastly gibbet to-day?

My father was here just now? I thought I saw him come,
Ghost-like to my prison bars; he spoke not, and I was dumb.
Oh, might but Jack come too, and speak, and take my hand,
To him I could pour out my heart, and he would understand!

He knows what I have done? Ah me! my thoughts are wild:
I fancied he came too, and looked on me and smiled;
He died, and was laid with pomp under the churchyard tree,
A grave in the prison walls will be made at dawn for me.

DREAMS THAT CAME TRUE.

How sweet the life of my youth with thee,
Though bitter the world of man to me!

We dwelt in an attic, lone and bare,
And coldly the winter stars shone there;

And scant the bread that we had to eat,
And sad our lives, though our love was sweet.

She said, "My love, my poet, my friend,
Hope on: the true must win in the end.

So long as you doubt my prophecies,
How can I trust when you call me wise?

At last men will hear and understand
A poet's voice, that speaks in the land;

And rich, in time, we two shall go
To ancient lands you have yearned to know:

We'll fly like the birds, without a care,
O'er purple seas and through cities fair;

And taste the breath of a morning breeze
Blown off piny clefts of the Pyrenees;

And hear in Venice sweet Tasso's song,
By stately gondola borne along.

We'll sail to Egypt, and rest awhile
In palm-girt palace beside the Nile,

And watch, from our roof-top, Canopus risė,
In silvery splendour 'mid opal skies;

Then dream sweet days in the southern seas,
Till we reach the land of Pericles,

And see Athenè's purple hill,
Whose marble columns gleam golden still;

And find, wherever we chance to go,
That my poet's fame has journeyed too.

What days to wait for!" And then she smiled,
By such fond fancies from care beguiled.

The years have passed, and passed as she said.
Alas, the seer of my life was dead!

They call me poet, and crown my brow,—
I heed not fame or its guerdon now.

What praise can alter the past for thee,
Whose love was stronger than death for me?

Ah, could we meet at our attic door,
In tears, as often we met before!

A single sorrow we shared as one
Were worth all the joys I taste alone!

THE WIFE'S PRAYER.

SIDE by side we hear, at twilight, voices clear and laughter sweet,
Little scholars bounding homeward through the dreary London street;
Then I pray, whilst gazing sadly on my husband's face of stone:
God send at last a happy child to join our hearts in one!

Oh, to live a life so sundered! Is the beggar at my door
Worse than widowed, worse than childless, poor in heart as I am poor?
What is wealth without contentment? What is youth, however fair,
When love is only mimicked and affection brings despair?

Since we never loved each other, can I call it hard that he
Gives the world his noble nature, keeping all the clay for me?
Were my husband base or common, I could nurse my wounded pride,
Feeling saintly, being martyred, standing lofty by his side.

He is good, and true, and manly. Oh, Heavens, that I should know
All his virtues, since they hurt me more than any vice could do!
Must I take the courteous nothings of his smile, his voice, his eyes,
Wondering ever like a vassal what behind such coldness lies?

But the happy, happy children! He whose look is ice to me,
Melts to laughing lucent gladness when a child is on his knee;
All his cynical composure is banished for a while,
And his lips are swords that stab me with their sweet caressing smile!

Fain I'd have a little daughter, dove-eyed, delicate, and fair,
With her father's brow and bearing, and, perhaps, her mother's hair,—
Would he love her less for likeness to the mother never loved?
Would his heart at last yearn to me, newly, strongly, strangely moved?

Oh, my child of dreams unspoken! prophet sweet to saddest heart!
Unseen always, and yet bearing in my life the loveliest part!
Never yet could living maiden to a happy mother be
What the daughter of my dreamings and desertion is to me.

Sometimes the vision cometh with a new and glad unrest,
With a sense of care delicious for the baby at my breast;
Then, as one who in her slumbers some blest strain of music hears,
Will a sound of baby-laughter fall upon my raptured ears.

But supremely as a maiden doth my dreamed-of daughter rise,
Knitting with her joy and sweetness all our severed sympathies;

Tender, sparkling, artless; bringing nearer every day,
Perfect life and love unbroken, now as far as heaven away.

I am sick for very longing; I could fold my hands and die!
All the loneliness remaineth, the vision passeth by.
Shall I find some other comfort? Will the might of silent tears
Melt at last the ice of feeling which has gathered with the years?

MATTHIAS TO ALBERTUS.

My best Albertus, when your master's dead,
Let no one praise him; Death would be no friend,
If he should set my scholars all agog
In vindication of my claim to fame.
I wish to live in your fond hearts a while,
To have your children learn to love me too.
Beyond this, being dead, I fain would die;
And vex not straying spirits any more,
By finger-posts that only miss the way,
Whilst Matthias shall take his fill of rest—
Shall sleep the sleep that dreads no troubled dawn,
And wake or wake not—as seems best to God.
What have I done, projected, or achieved,
Worthy to live outside the hearts I love?
Nothing! and ere you weep and tear your hair,
Crying—"A madman, lo, our master's mad!

Oh! what a noble light is here snuffed out!"
Hear me unto the end. Then, if you will,
That I am mad,—better be fool than knave,
I'll take your verdict, if your love comes too.

Albertus, you were with me yesterday,
That day of gold and purple, tears and shame.
You witnessed how the thousands gathered there,
Wept with delight, the while glad music filled
Those halls majestic with bewildering sound;
And how they wreathed my brows with laurel leaves,
None doubting that a genius was praised
But I.
Amid that peerless scene,
The ladies, brilliant as a bed of flowers,
The crimson banners waving in the sun,
The walls with bright exotics garlanded,
The myriad rapturous faces turned to mine;
Speechless, I stood, too weak to do my will,
To cast aside the crown I had not won,
And speak the truth with bitter tears of shame.
"Oh, friends! oh, world! take back your laurel wreath,
And keep until some poet come indeed,
Worthy to have the nations at his feet.

You see before you a mere charlatan,
One who has so well played a hero's part,
The wise as well as simple have believed.
You know not how this heart has mocked at you,
You know not how this heart has cheated you.
But now I lay it bare. Read and believe."
This and much more I could have uttered then,
Had I not been a craven child of man,
Prizing my midgelike self beyond the truth—
Bright atmosphere of light around me spread.
But what I dared not say to all the world,
Fearless, I say to you; for perfect love
Bestows its largeness on the thing beloved,
And pitying loves what once it loved with pride.
Of all my scholars you have prized me most,
Prizing not only what I had of soul,
Unblemished and divine—if aught I had—
But the poor human part with all its flaws.
And you, long singled out to be my friend,
Chosen companion of my splendid joys,
And lover of my fame—now lone I lead,
Into the charnel house that they have hid.
Oh! do not leave me when I silent sit
In the chill atmosphere of self-remorse,

A naked, shuddering, and abject thing;
But clasp me close, and let your glad young voice
Persuade me nothing is too mean to love!
You're young, poor child, and like a wingèd seed,
By sportive breezes borne, your happy soul
Is careless led along life's sunny ways,
To fall and flower wherever Heaven bid:
And once I too had such sweet faith as this,
Taking my life to be a part of God,
That is, of Nature, bound up in all good,
And no hard problem, I must solve alone.
But oh, how long ago! My youth and I,
Parted as friends who find their goals too wide,
One bent upon attaining cloistered Truth,
The other loving flattery and ease.
Alas! too soon I learned to read men's hearts,
And that weird wisdom led my own astray.
I saw a giddy path that climbed to fame,
And throwing off my burdens, one by one,
Conscience and aspiration and remorse,
I trod it lightly, never looking back
To reach the pinnacle whereon I stand:—
Dwelling in palaces, the friend of kings,
With ladies flocking round my harpsichord,

As beauteous birds that know the tamer's voice,
Taking his small enchantments for divine—
A nation, captured, kneeling at my feet,
And all men glad because a poet speaks.
Albertus, like those painters of base soul,
Who gain their bread by foisting on the world
Mock Raphaels and Michael Angelos,
I gave men common coin and called it gold,
And heaven-born poetry was my overthrow.
I who once loved her with a perfect love,
As noble knight some maiden chaste and fair!
Alas, would I had sinned in aught but this!
Slain some one in my cups, robbed, cheated, lied,
To die upon the gallows like a wretch!
Than shame this sweetest mistress of my soul,
Whom, decked out like a dancing-girl at fairs,
I used but to ensnare the minds of men.
For human fancy, fashioned like a flower,
Hath root and stem: the first and nobler part
Soars upward in the light, and blossoms fair;
The other, nourished darkly underground,
Consorts with things unlovely and unnamed.
And I disdained the airy realms of day
For fleshly darkness. By no strain divine

I lifted soaring spirits, with light wing,
To those empyrean heights where greatness sits ;
No life has caught a radiance from mine,
As hill-tops burnished by the neighbouring sun.
Oh ! sin most abject and unpardonable,
To prostitute divine intelligence,
The little all we have akin to God !
I weep for envy of those glorious souls,
Who thought no more of fame than God of praise,
And left untarnished lives and thoughts sublime,
To be a heritage for all the world.
Whilst I athirst for honour, wealth, and ease,
Have lied to all except myself—yet live ;
I never did what good I might have done,
Perhaps an honest nothing—some men's best,
Gleaning with gladsome heart the golden fields
Of wise men's thoughts—content with common joys,
Spring-tide and flowers and birds and guileless love.
But what have I in common with all these ?
The parasite of courts, the servitor
Of sinful beauty, 'mid a thousand more. . . .
Well, let me make an end,
Herein I sinned.
I never once believed in this same self!

Imposed on others as a master-piece.
I never once thrilled with the holy fire
Of inspiration, seeing glorious things,
And lovely shapes, nameless till named by me.
I knew not the unutterable throes
Of genius, in its mighty bringing forth,
Nor the proud bliss, akin to mothers' joys,
That poets feel, when from their weary brain
Springs forth some heaven-born child, the pride of time.
All that I did was done with base intent,
And joy can no more come of such behest,
Than miners grow sweet gardens underground.
No biddings sent I to those happy elves
Who hover round the visionary's soul
To do his will, bearing from worlds unseen,
What treasure passing gold and pearl, what stores
Of fancies choicely culled, he chance to need.
Nay, rather evil sprites did heap my lap
With gifts that helped me to my deeds of shame,
Keys that unlock dark chambers of men's hearts,
Mirrors in which, by dire translation, seemed
Fair Nature's self, unlovely and impure,
Fetters and gyves to hold back lovely Truth,
Unearthly flowers with subtlest poison charged,

And fruits that never ripened in the sun,
Of which to taste is to be damned past hope,
As I am damned, ah, me!
And when I stand,
(As soon I must, for I am old and worn,)
A stranger shivering on the hearth of Death,
Hearing no more the plash of that sweet sea
Whose waves are life, what welcome can I hope
But the eternal cradlings of repose?
To converse with the happy things that dwell
In spheres whose essence is of soul, not sense;
To walk with godlike men, nay, God himself;
To live for ever, ever long to live!—
This good men's heaven never can be mine.
But calm, though very sorrowful, I go
Unto my portion; it is fit and meet—
Sleep never rippled by a single dream,
Through countless ages, sleep, Time cannot wake.

Weep not, oh! friend, when from your children's hands
Spring-blossoms drop upon your master's tomb;
If weep you must, tell them my fable, thus:—
"One gift the sons of men obtain from God,
Which to despise, is forfeit evermore

Of that inestimable fatherhood;
A torch to light them through the winding ways
Of doubt and error all must tread alone;
Whose flame being kindled at the source supreme
Of light itself, if wilfully put out,
Is so much added darkness to the world,
And sin and shame, where love and light might be.
And he who lieth here, so sinned . . . oh! pray
For him, he held your father dear!"
Be wise,
Good friend, Albertus; choose a gentle wife,
And love her well. Live nobly first,
Then triumph if you may. Farewell. Farewell!

LETTER TO A CRITIC.

"MADAM—or sir? How know I whom to name?
What matter? Tears and thanks come all the same.
Thanks, do I say? Ah, me! my boy is dead.
Your letter lies with flowers upon his bed.
I fain would put it in his coffin too.
How he would leap with joy could he but know!
Some folks would rail unkindly. I forbear;
And well I know, no joy can reach him there!
He knew it too. Dear sir, my heart will break,—
Kind madam, bless you for my Walter's sake!
How could you know the poet's days were few?
'Twas not my Walter, 'twas a book, to *you*:
No worse, certes, no better than the rest;
One out of thousands; why, then, need of haste?
A freak most likely, not a human fate.

"And now comes sweetest praise, too late, too late!
'There's stuff in you, young poet. Strange to say,
(Poets, you know, assail me every day),
I hate a book in rhyme as soon as named,
And ere a poem's read, 'tis straight condemned.
But you were born to sing past doubt: then sing,—
Pour out your heartful like a bird in spring.
For fame and honours thirst not; but be true
To that high gift of song, God's gift of song to you.
Leave all the rest. Heart, conscience, soul, declare
To each his verdict. Best reward is there.
Yet since life means bread, books, a little ease,
I'll keep your poems, use them, an' you please,
As vignettes to my monthly—they'll relieve
It's over-seriousness; and, meantime, you receive
This handsel of your toil. So now, adieu!'

"Oh, Walter, Walter! this was meant for *you*.
Kind sir, good madam, in this sweet spring-tide
'Twas of consumption that my poet died.
He yearned to live—'Earth is a lovely place,'
He said, with such strange look upon his face.
'Don't blame me, mother, that I want to know
What I am, what life is, before I go

The dark, dark ways of Death. Yet, mother dear,
I pray, I trust in God, I know no fear.
Death comes too soon, that's all

"'The swallows skim
My favourite pool e'en now, and all the brim
Is set with marigold. But warm July,
To feel the July sun, before I die,
Glow in my veins, breathe the rose-scented air
Beneath the beech-trees, screened from noonday glare,
Gaze on the blue, the infinite! Oh, please,
Dear mother, run: it was the postman's ring.
Still, foolish heart. No matter what it bring,
'Twill not be what I want. Stay, one word yet:
Suppose that London letter comes too late,
With comfort, praise, a God-speed meant for me.
Be happy, though the poet is not by;
For if his book lives, can your Walter die?
My book, it is myself, my best self. Best is poor,
In God's sight; yet, if best, He asks no more.'

"Dear sir, kind madam, he died yesterday.
Your letter must have started on its way.
How foolish these regrets!—not yours the blame.
Indeed, indeed, I thank you all the same."

RED HACON: A NORSE LEGEND.

KING of Gothland was Red Hacon; braver king was never seen:
'King of men" they called Red Hacon, for his majesty of mien;
If we saw him pass before us as his subjects saw him then,
We should find our statures dwarfing till we hardly looked like men.

Tall and stalwart was Red Hacon: when he led his chiefs to fight,
All his foes would straightway know him by the grandeur of his height.
Feared and fearless was Red Hacon, with an eye that never quailed,
With a step that never halted, with a hand that never failed.

Sweéter spouse had never monarch than Red Hacon's
Synnové:
His love for her was deeper than his lips would ever say;
Deep and single was that passion, and it compassed his
great soul,
As the mighty snake encircling the round world from pole
to pole.

Fresh as spring and fair as summer was Red Hacon's
Synnové:
In her eyes you thought a sunbeam had been caught and
pressed to stay;
'Twas like happy streamlets rippling when you heard her
laugh and speak;
Not a line of thought was written on her brow and rounded
cheek.

More than life and more than conquest to her spouse was
Synnové;
He, the feared of all the fearless, owned a woman's silken
sway;
In her presence wrath would vanish, and his voice would
change again
From the thunder-roll of passion, to the sound of summer
rain.

Friends by thousands had Red Hacon, but not one so well beloved,
As Sigurdr of Trygvason, warrior brave and statesman proved.
Said Red Hacon to his people, "When our land lies under sea,
Then the man I call my brother will become false friend to me."

Foes by thousands had Sigurdr—monarch's love is dearly bought:
All the courtiers found him traitor in some look or word or thought;
All his purple honours made him, like a king in thick of fight,
Chosen target for the arrows of the men who feared his might.

Came a sea-chief to Red Hacon: "If I speak a lie to-day,
By the thunders of great Odin, may it be the last I say!
May I die the death accursèd and blest Asgard never see,
If the man thou callest brother is not false as Hell to thee!'

As a sword that's quick unsheathèd gleamed Red Hacon's angry eyes:
"He who foully plays the traitor as a traitor foully dies."

As a waterspout that gushes on a sudden overhead,
Gushed the life-blood of the chieftain, by Sigurdr's monarch shed.

Came a woman to Red Hacon; she was young and very fair.
With a face of marble whiteness and a mass of dusky hair;
Shame and grief and dread unspoken filled her large dilating eyes,
As she cried before him, kneeling, "Oh, my king, I speak or die!"

"'Tis Sigurdr of Trygvason who has brought me to my shame;
'Tis Sigurdr of Trygvason who denies my child his name:
One he seeks with other seeking, I could touch her with my hand,
Though her name I dare not utter; 'tis the highest in the land!"

"Here is golden balm for sorrow; let it comfort thee and thine.
Name or sire thy infant needs not, I will claim and call him mine.

Sweet revenge I cannot give thee, sweet revenge I cannot take;
All thy sland'rous words are pardoned, for thy sex's helpless sake."

Must the mountain snow-wreath shrivel where the beast's hoof-mark hath passed?
Must the silvery birch tree shrivel 'neath the tempest's fiery blast?
Must the long dark winter follow summer's bright unblemished day?
Must I sing thy fall from women, oh! sweet sinful Synnové?

As a sudden death comes grimly in a house of festive mirth,
As a darkness hiding heaven, as a plague upon the earth,
As with blight decay the harvests that were golden yesterday,
As a star that's lost in heaven, fell Red Hacon's Synnové.

'Twas Sigurdr of Trygvason who abused his master's faith ;
'Twas Sigurdr of Trygvason who had wronged him to the death :
True as Heaven he had trusted, false as Hell had been betrayed,
Noble friendship, monarch's favours, by the basest shame repaid.

With a mad and murderous instinct, rushed Red Hacon to the pair ;
Hands that ne'er had harmed a woman, seized a young wife's golden hair ;
Then, as struck with sudden palsy, sword and arm together fell,
And he only stabbed with sorrow one his heart had loved too well.

" Loving as I loved no other, must I lose thee, Synnové ?
Trusting as I trusted no one, couldst thou cheat me, Synnové ?
Hast thou loved me once and left me ? or have I been ever blind ?
Couldst thou sin and look so guileless ? Couldst thou bear to have me kind ?

"Purer than the stars I held thee, oh, my sweet, my Synnové!
Level with the beasts I find thee, oh, my lost, my Synnové!
Can I hate thee, once so worshipped? Can I love thee not and live?
Can I slay thee as the foeman? Can I leave thee—and forgive?"

As the first wild storm that rages on the rugged Finmark shore,
With a warning to the fisher that his boat is safe no more,
From the woman in her beauty to the traitor turns he now,
Blood-red passion like a firebrand scarring tawny cheek and brow.

Twice his lips essayed to curse him, twice his arm was raised to slay;
Then he wept the tears of sorrow, and his passion passed away,

Sheathed his sword, and whispered feebly, "I would slay ye if I could,
But my life must end in madness if 'twere poisoned with such blood."

As a brave man fell Red Hacon on a purple field of fame;
Later times have long forgiven that sole blot upon his name;*
Though he loved too much for glory, not a bard in all the land
But hath set him in Walhalla with great Odin's shining band.

In the forest as a were-wolf doth Sigurdr's spirit stray;
In a lake of pitchy darkness did they bury Synnové.
Oft the woodman hears him howling as he calls her from the grave,
And beholds her golden tresses rise and fall upon the wave.

* It was deemed cowardly or unheroic to allow such an enemy to escape with his life.

DON JOSÉ'S MULE, JACINTHA.

FOR CHILDREN.

In palmy days, now long gone by, no Don in Cadiz city
Possessed a mule like Don José's, so useful or so pretty.
Oh, children, listen to my tale, and give a tear of pity
To Don José's mule, Jacintha!

Once Don José had lived gaily, and then his servants all,
From the head-cook in the kitchen to Jacintha in her stall,
On every dainty fattened—but oh! there came a fall
To Don José's mule, Jacintha.

Once Don José's purse was well filled, but his hand was ever ready
To his brothers and his nephews, who were spendthrifts and unsteady,—
"Oh, my master, unwise givers sure at last themselves grow needy!"
Said Don José's mule, Jacintha.

True enough, there came a morning when the Alcayde's men
were laying
Hands on all Don José's chattels, for there seemed no way
of paying
Otherwise his debts and bond-writs; then, oh, sorrowful the
braying
Of Don José's mule, Jacintha!

Poor Don José's house was ransacked of its treasures old
and new,
Pictures, gems, and suits of armour, gold and relics from
Peru:
Nothing spared they, even taking all the trappings red and
blue
Of Don José's mule, Jacintha.

But Don José was hidalgo of the true Quixotic spirit—
If misfortune were upon him, far too proud was he to
fear it;
And quite worthy such a master, in the same heroic spirit,
Was Don José's mule, Jacintha.

With a stately contemplation glanced Don José on his villa—
Glanced on every grove of myrtle and on every marble pillar;
Thought of sunny olive vineyard and of luscious well-filled cellar—
Then of his mule, Jacintha.

Said Don José, "Not for fountains, nor for halls of gilded stone
Was man's soul made, nor for riches, nor for meat and drink alone,
But for grateful, true affection—and no other man shall own
Don José's mule, Jacintha."

He continued contemplating, meantime smiling somewhat sadly—
"Ah! 'tis well my servants left me—scanty fare would suit *them* badly;
But there's one who bore me up-hill, and will bear me down as gladly—
'Tis Don José's mule, Jacintha.

"She can do without her trappings; she'll not rage because her ration
Comes at every meal-time shorter than her fondest expectation;
Scorn she'll never dream of showing at my ruined situation—
Will Don José's mule, Jacintha.

"She'll not tell me I was foolish—she'll not preach her own advice;
She'll not constantly upbraid me in a half-condoling voice;
But she'll serve me when I need her—and no gold shall be the price
Of Don José's mule, Jacintha."

Then Don José mounted gaily, though his secret heart was swelling,
And the two together travelled to a humble little dwelling:
Said the Don, "For consolation, give me that which has no telling,
Like Don José's mule, Jacintha's!"

Night and morning came Don José to Jacintha's modest stable,
And his thin white hands would groom her with the skill that they were able,
And the largest share of salad, from her master's scanty table,
Had Don José's mule, Jacintha.

Every day he took an airing, and no king could sit more stately:
Then Jacintha's ears pricked proudly, and she moved her legs sedately;
Oh, never fallen greatness was upheld by mule so greatly
As Don José's by Jacintha!

Neither trotting, neither ambling, was her sober saddened pace,
But a kind of martial marching, full of dignity and grace;
Every cavalcade and palfrey, every chariot gay gave place
To Don José's mule, Jacintha.

When Don José, empty-handed, came unto the stable door,
Far too proud for disappointment, or to show a wish for more,
Gaily to her empty hay-rack, as if she'd ample store,
Went Don José's mule, Jacintha.

Very solemn grew Jacintha, suiting thus her master's mood;
Very bare-ribbed grew Jacintha, but her head was never bowed.
"We'll die like true Castilians," was the maxim staunch and proud
Of Don José's mule, Jacintha.

True enough, there broke a morning when the thin hand came no more,
With its scanty bunch of parsley, to Jacintha's stable door;
Then, as one who lies down gladly when a hard day's work is o'er,
Lay Don José's mule, Jacintha.

Softly then, the snow-flakes hurried from the passing winter clouds,
And the master and the servant wrapt in white unspotted shrouds,
Till the spring-time brought the wild flowers, and they bloom in coloured crowds,
O'er Don José and Jacintha.

IN A SHOP WINDOW.

How will a sweet name catch a careless eye,
And hint some story to the passer-by!
We hurry on to deepest feeling stirred,
By what? the music of a little word.
In a shop window, once, beside the sea,
Thus was my fancy snared: there could not be
A less suggestive window anywhere,—
Music, nothing but music, yet none there!
Mazurka, waltz, and polka piled pell-mell,
Machine-made music just turned out to sell.
When sudden, 'midst these gauds my roving eye
Was riveted: 'twas but a name, and why
I know not, yet I straightway loved the thing.
"Whose are these 'Voices—voices of the Spring'?"
I asked. "Sir, the composer's dead,—
Died young, in want, unknown," the shopman said.
"And now these works of his not only live,
Are even famous: willingly I'd give

My shopful for some more ; yet I own,
Their fame intrigues me, since they stand alone—
At least I think so. It may be that I err.
But take them home, just try them. Look you, sir,
These things are pitiful : always a lack
Of genius ! when found, we turn our back.
The poor wretch dies. Ah ! then his time is come ! "
I thanked the man, and took the music home ;
Then sat me down within my silent room,
But soon how changed, how musical ; I swept
A chord or two, and lo ! the year had leapt
From chill November to transparent May ;
In music spring had burst upon the earth—
A spring such as we dream of, one glad birth
Of flowers and birds and butterflies ; with song
The woodlands rang ; and all along
The marge of sunny pools the swallow flashed.
Bright silvery streams set free o'er pebbles plashed.
Oh, rapturous such a world and such a spring !
Nature and man together seemed to sing.
My heart sang too : and then I could have wept,
To think how one in Death's cold prison slept.
That joy was mine, yours may be an' you will.
The young composer's heart was cold and still.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE TWO BIRTHDAYS:

OR, HOPE AND RESIGNATION.

A YEAR ago, a little year,
I sat, a lonely thing,
Awaiting what might be the cheer
My birthday morn should bring,
When lo! I heard a fluttering sound,
And, looking up, beheld
A troop of forms that flocked around,
Like fairies out of eld.

All beauteous were they, winged with gold.
And, as they danced in glee,
The world no more seemed dark and cold,
But made for joy and me.

I asked not whence they came or why ;
I knew as well as they.
Oft had they passed my threshold by,
But now seemed come to stay.

Like rose-buds garlanded they spanned
My room from roof to hearth.
They touched my lips, they clasped my hand,
I felt no child of earth.
And, syren sweet, the song they sang
I wept for joy to hear.
" At last," the fairy chorus rang,
" We bring a blissful year."

A year ago, a little year !
I keep my quiet room.
No radiant forms with wings are here ;
No fairy troop has come,
And all the happy thoughts they left
Have faded like a dream.
Sometimes I feel as one bereft,
And sometimes richer seem.

Yet do I sit alone no more,
One guest steals to my side ;
Ofttime I've heard her at my door,
At last I open wide.
Half-nun, half-angel seems this guest,
And pensive is her smile ;
Yet doth she cheer my birthday best,
And solitude beguile.

Where'er she goes she brings an air
Of twilight calm and ease.
Her voice is as the south wind fair,
That stills the troubled seas.
She cannot bring back banished hours,
Nor those fair hopes I weep ;
But she can cover them with flowers,
Where in their graves they sleep.

MY FRIEND: A PORTRAIT.

Not of the happy souls who sing
  Is he my heart loves best;
His speech is not a magic thing,
  His thoughts are poorly drest.

His path lies not among the great,
  Their praise he doth not speak;
He dwells 'mid those of mean estate,
  The lowly and the meek.

He is not beauteous as a god,
  What Nature's kings should be;
No eye would note him in a crowd,
  Nor heart leap up to see.

No guerdons of the world are his,
Nor honours, wealth, nor praise;
Small is his share of earthly bliss,
Laborious are his days.

But ah! could others read aright
That mind so pure and fair,
How would they envy his delight,
His joy beyond compare!

Whilst we aspire to heavenly things
In vision faint and dim,
His spirit mounts on golden wings,
And all is clear to him.

Whilst we lament man's evil days,
By pain and wrong opprest,
His lips are ever prone to praise,
Bright hopes burn in his breast.

His joys come hardly once a year,
Whilst sorrows crowd apace,—
To him each day is glad and fair,
The world a blessed place.

So small, so great his pleasures are,
Alternate sage and child,
He looks with rapture on a star,
A tiny floweret wild.

What marvels poets see and hear,
All learn when he is by;
Music affects the heedless ear,
Beauty the careless eye.

He chooseth not, but teaches all,
And gladdens without heed;
His joys, like dews of heaven, fall
On those who stand in need.

Ill fortune halteth at his door,
And sorrows pass not by;
They leave him tranquil as before,
With spirit calm and high.

His treasure none can take by stealth,
His portion none destroy,
Since things unseen are all his wealth,
And nature all his joy!

Nor is he niggard of his hoard,
He largely gives his own—
A beauteous thought, a kindling word,
A glimpse of worlds unknown.

For none so full of love as he,
His wisdom hath no end;
The proudest on his bended knee
Might pray for such a friend.

TO MADAME BODICHON OF ALGIERS.

DEDICATORY, 1867.

FAIN would I link your dear and honoured name
To some bright page of story or of song,
That so my praises might not do you wrong,
And I might take your thanks and feel no shame.
But be my patron, though I feebly praise
A time when, with the swallows taking flight,
I sought your lovely land that loves the light,
And woke anew, and lived enchanted days.
Ah, could I tell with what a glory towers
The palm-tree, flushing gold on purple skies;
Or how white temples, each a marvel, rise,
'Mid oleanders tipped with rosy flowers,
This little book were such, for its own sake,
A poet well might give—an artist take!

TO FRANZ LISZT.

(WEIMAR, 1871.)

IMPROVISATION UPON IMPROVISATION.

FAIN would I praise such poetry as thine,
In fitting measures as a poet should,
But, ah! thy music brings a deeper mood,
And only tears acknowledge the divine!

THE DOOMED ONE.

Voices fatiloquent, dire prophecies,
Dooming one innocent to matchless ill,
Fain would I shun ye; close my shrinking eyes,
Stop up unwilling ears, I hear ye still!

Fate's ministers, stern as implacable,
Why am I chosen, of all mortal kind,
Victim and scape-goat? Look around ye well:
Others have blacker hearts; but ye are blind.

Hearken ye not, reluct not? Yet I plead.
Who would not plead for the sweet right to live?
Shorten my days, but let me live indeed;
Life measured out is only living death!

Hear yet again. Torture me with fierce pain,
Make my nights hateful, burdensome my days,
My prayer is but to live as other men,
Veiled the dread future from my glamoured gaze.

Gaily the stag frisks o'er the dappled lawn,
Whose heart the cruel hunt shall break next day;
Yon wretch, for whom the gibbet rose at dawn,
Once roved the fields a careless child at play.

Many of mortal born I know shall fare
Far worse than I, only the dread decree
Is writ in secret: doom may be as near—
They dread it not, because they cannot see,

Here is Fate's sting, the direst lot of all,
Spell-bound to lie beneath the very rock
You know will crush you, watch it slowly fall,
Helpless, a crawling worm, to shun the shock.

Useless repinings! Close the toils are spread;
My feet are caught; I see but cannot stay
The hand of Fate. Then let me pray, instead:
Come sooner, awful doom! oh, come to-day!

TRANSLATIONS.

THE POST-BOY.

FROM THE GERMAN OF NICHOLAS LENAU.

SWEET the May night; silvery clouds
On their swift way wending,
'Twas as if to see the spring,
Earthward they were bending.

Still and lone lay mead and grove,
Every path forsaken;
Watchman in the quiet ways,
The moon its post had taken.

Soft and light the zephyrs breathed,
Senses sweetly steeping;
All the children of the spring
Lay in the still world sleeping.

Tranquil flowed the brooklet by,
Flowers its cool banks wreathing,
Wondrous fragrance through and through
Dusky chambers breathing.

Noisy was our post-boy then,
Cracked his whip so loudly,
Making hill and valley ring
With his horn blown proudly.

Four strong horses sure of hoof,
Clattered on before us;
Through the dewy, flowery land
Willingly they bore us.

Wood and meadow now flashed by;
Hardly seen, they vanished;
One by one the pleasant vales
From our sight were banished.

Midway in this sweet May world,
God's Acre now extended,
'Twas but a glimpse we got and yet
All careless thoughts it ended.

Close beneath the fair hill-side
Rose its white walls eerie;
High above, a Calvary
Showed its stone face dreary.

Softer rode our post-boy then,
Checked his paces maddened,
Drew his horses to a stop,
Saw the cross, and saddened.

"Here must halt both hoof and wheel;
Bear with me, travellers hurried:
Yonder lies my comrade dear,
In the cold earth buried.

"Never was a braver lad;
No post-boy in the city
Could blow a horn so well as he;
Sirs, 'tis an endless pity.

"So here I ever halt awhile,
Right loud I blow and cheerly,
Greeting him beneath the sod,
My comrade loved so dearly."

Thereat he blew both loud and strong,
One glad air and another;
It seemed as though the sound must reach
Even his sleeping brother.

Whilst far and wide the clanging peal
From the hill-sides resounded,
Well might we dream that from the grave
A voice in echo sounded.

Farther we drove, and farther still,
Reins now loosely swinging,
But long the clanging of that horn
Loud in my ears kept ringing.

THE BEAUTIFUL ALSO MUST DIE.

A DIRGE.*

THE beautiful also must die! Here men and immortals
are helpless.
Of iron, not to be melted, the breast of the Stygian Zeus:
Once, and once only, did Love win from the Ruler of
Shadows
Leave that threshold to cross, but straightway the guerdon
was cancelled.
Not Aphrodite herself could heal her beautiful lover,
Torn by the tusk of the wild boar; nor could a mother
immortal
Snatch from the clutches of Death, her son, the godlike
Achilles,

* This is an attempt to render the meaning of Schiller's beautiful *Nenia* or dirge, recently heard in London with Gade's choral music.

When at the Scæan gate, human, he yielded his ghost up,
Then from the waves rose Thetis, with all her Nereids, to mourn him :
See the gods weep, and the goddesses each one tearful and saddened.
To think that the lovely must fade, the beautiful also must perish !
Yet how noble to be a dirge on the lips of the loved ones !
Unwept, unhonoured, the base and the common go down unto Hades.

*HÖLDERLIN'S SONG OF FATE.**

FROM THE GERMAN.

ABOVE in light, oh, happy ones!
Smooth paths beneath your feet,
Ye wander, lulled to heavenly rest,
By breezes soft and sweet,
As music that a woman brings
From lightly fingered citole strings.

Fateless as sleeping babes are ye,
Who breathe supernal air;
Close shut as buds within the leaves,
Your souls keep always fair.
With eyes immortal, ever bright
Undimmed by the eternal Light.

* Given with Brahm's music at the Crystal Palace. See *Athenæum*, May 20, 1883.

Whilst unto us who dwell on earth,
Rest is a boon denied;
Blind from the moment of our birth,
As stream from mountain side
O'er crag and crag leaps darkling down,
Headlong we plunge into the unknown.

FRAGMENTS FROM THE SECOND PART OF "FAUST."

FAUST GREETS THE SUNRISE.

FROM THE PRELUDE.

QUICK beat Life's pulses, once again alert,
Gently to greet the dayspring.
Thou Earth, so still and mute throughout the night,
Already dost thou make thy presence felt,
Stirring and quickening purpose,
Urging to grasp at highest destiny!
In this dim dawn the world lies folded close;
The earth resounds with thousand-voicèd life;
Mists circling valleys' depths and valleys' rim,
Yet heavenly clearness penetrates the gloom,
And branch and bough, stirred with new life, shine forth
From the abyss wherein they lay in sleep;

Out of the deep, colour on colour glows,
Where leaf and flower tremble with dewy pearls :
A Paradise doth hem and girt me in.
Behold the mountain tops now one by one
Announce the glory of the hour to come !
Already they can revel in the light,
To be our portion later.
And now unto the verdant Alpine slopes
Is given form and brightness,
As step by step the light comes gradual down.
'Tis here ! But ah ! the dazzling rays
Blind me. Perforce I turn my head away.
Thus is it when a hope long nursed within,
That grows to steadfast wish, finds all at once
The portals of fulfilment wide,—
Then bursts, from hidden depths eternal,
Flame that consumes. We stand transfixed !
The torch of Life it was we fain would kindle—
A sea of fire surrounds us ! What a fire !
Say, is it Love that glows, or Hate,
Dispensing bliss and pain alternate ?
So once again we turn our thoughts to earth,
To hide us in the veil of youthful feeling.
Let me, then, keep the sun behind !

See yonder waterfall that cleaves the rocks,
With leap on leap it bursts impetuous forth,
Causing to flow a thousand streams,
Works high in the air spray over spray ascending,
Glory past words! A rainbow spans the storm,
Now clearly painted, now in broken rays;
Whilst round about doth fall the cool and airy shower,
Mirror of man's endeavour.
Muse deep thereon! and thou wilt understand:
A bright reflection!—such is human life!

FAUST'S ANSWER TO THE QUESTION, "HAST THOU NEVER KNOWN CARE?"

I have roamed the world,
And each desire I clutched at by the hair.
What captivated, straightway I pursued;
And what would fain escape me, ever followed.
Thus did I live only to long and have,
And ever more desired; and so with force
I led a stormy life—once wild and strong,
Now wiser grown, more circumspect;

What life is, and the world, I know full well,—
What lies beyond is hidden from our ken.
Fool! who would blindly pass these boundary lines,
Seeking his fellows who have gone before.
Let him stand steadfast here, and gaze around:
Not voiceless is the world unto the wise.
Why would he penetrate Eternity?
That which he knows let him but fully grasp,
And so fulfil his course of earthly days;
Taking no heed of shadows, if they come;
Finding at every step mishap and bliss,
Contented never.

FAUST'S LAST WORDS.

A SWAMP below the mountain stretches wide,
Poisoning all husbandry. To draw away
The deadly damp, that were the highest gain.
I open place for millions, here to dwell
Busy and free, if not secure from ill.
Green is the plain and fruitful; man and herds
Together on this newest spot of earth
Shall cheerful live, and, nestled 'mid the hills

Active as ants, shall thrive the fellowship.
Here in the land's deep bosom, Paradise,
There flows the river to the coast;
Filling each barren place.
Yes; now indeed my mind is quite made up,
This is the last conclusion of the wise—
Those only merit freedom, life also,
Who day by day do earn it,
And so fulfil, with danger girt around,
Of childhood, manhood, age, each active year.
Fain would I see my colony,
Free on free ground, around free nations, thrive.
To such a moment could I say indeed,
"Stay, thou art wondrous fair!"
Already, in a foretaste of such bliss,
To-day I breathe a joy ineffable.

ARIEL'S SONG.

When the spring-tide raineth blossoms,
Shedding brightness everywhere;
Gladdens earth's green benediction,
Eyes of mortals dull with care;

Crowds of elf-folk, tiny sprites,
Haste to help where help they can,
Whether saintly, whether sinful,
Pitying each unhappy man.

VERSELETS.

"Who would fain command,
Must therein find beatitude.
His heart is full of highest purposes,
Close shut within, that, whispered soft
To trusty ears, no sooner turn to deeds,
Than all the world admires.
So shall he ever be the loftiest and best,
Enjoyment but makes common."

"Tarry not. Be bold in action,
Though the multitude delay."

"Renown is naught. The deed is all in all."

"Place is there in the round wide world
For noble deeds."

PICTURES FROM THE ODYSSEY.

I.—TELEMACHUS SETS SAIL IN SEARCH OF HIS FATHER.

(BOOK II.)

So they provisioned the ship, as bade them the son of Odysseus.
Straightway he boarded her deck, and with him went Pallas Athene,
By the arched stem she sat down, Telemachus seated beside her.
Quickly on shore the sailors let loose from its cable the anchor,
Then, the smooth sides scaling, swift each man took his place at the rowlock.
Bidden by fair-eyed Athene, came breezes fair to befriend them—

West wind and zephyr they came, whistling, and freshening the billows.

Now at the young man's bidding, the men, laying hands to the tackling,

Hoisted the pine-mast aloft, its stęm into hollow block fitting,

Fixing it fast with forestays, and tightening the sails to the rigging.

Freshly the west wind blowing, bellied the sails white and gleaming;

White round the ship's keel came the sea-foam, dashing and curling in eddies.

So, with the sheets all made fast, and favouring gales their course speeding,

All to their feet now rose, and brimful of wine filled they the chalice;

Grateful they poured out the wine, libations unto the immortals:

First unto her, Zeus' daughter Athene, their help and befriender,

Then all the night through, till dawn, skimmed they lightly o'er the blue waters.

II.—THE TAUNTER REBUKED.

(BOOK VIII.)

GUEST-FRIEND, not seemly thy words, but those of a being presumptuous:

Thus we see not to all the gods grant full measure of graces;

Not to each man they mete out eloquence, beauty, and wisdom.

Mean may a man be in looks, yet his speech is full of enchantment;

Joyful all folks flock to hear him speak out his thoughts never halting;

Modest and winning withal, though foremost of town-folk assembled.

Lo! as he walks through the market, all gaze as on visitant godlike.

Comeliness grant the gods others, fashioning them like to immortals,

Whilst vaunting their words are, and empty, both savour lacking and sweetness.

So was thy outer man fashioned, a god had not made thee more comely;

Ill doth thy mind match with it, since thou makest me wrathful and bitter,

Saying the thing best unsaid, the words in a true man unseemly.

THE ROSE AND HUMAN HOPE.

(FROM THE SPANISH OF ESPRONCEDA.)

OF garden fair the ornament and pride,
On stem erect, behold the budding rose!
Deep-hued and pure its folded leaves unclose,
And matchless fragrance shedding far and wide.
But soon the sun beats down with burning ray,
A flame of fire 'mid torrid August skies,—
Then fades the rose and all its perfume dies,
Whilst one by one its petals fall away.
So for a day my fortune splendid shone,
Clear beamed my heaven, and Love bright wingèd came.
How could I choose but dream of joy and fame?
Ah me! dreams hardly mine but they were gone!
The sweet hope I had cherished like a flower,
Stripped of both leaf and blossom in an hour!

THE WIDOW OF MALABAR.

(FROM THE SPANISH OF HARTZENBUSCH.)

PRIEST.

Now to thy husband's pyre, and then the sky!

WIDOW.

If straight to heaven I go, I freely die.

PRIEST.

With him to sup in heavenly mansions fair.

WIDOW.

Shall I be newly mated to him there?

PRIEST.

For ever, ever his.

WIDOW.

If it be so,
Then shall this frame yon fierce flames never know.

PRIEST.

No glory seekest thou?

WIDOW.

Priest, withdrawn my word.
Were heaven heaven with a spouse abhorred?

THE SONG OF THE SWAN.

FOR MUSIC.

(FROM THE SPANISH OF HARTZENBUSCH.)

DOVE.

SWEET echoes reach me,
From garden anear ;
Tell me, oh streamlet,
What music I hear !
Distant the country
Whence I have come.
Strains so enchanting
Ne'er heard I at home.

STREAMLETS.

Dove, through our garden
Now winging your way,

This music unearthly
That tempts you to stay,
'Tis the song of the dying,
The song of the swan.
Death comes near and nearer
Still he sings on.

DOVE.

Oh, little birds, follow!
Come, hasten with me
In joy and in wonder
This marvel to see.
Let us list to the music
Borne softly along.
How blessed the singer
Who dies thus with song!

L'ENVOI.

TO MY FRIENDS.

COME not, friends, when I am dead,
Weeping to my silent bed.
Linger not with tears and gloom,
In the death-becalmèd room.
What ye loved, ye'll find not there :
Death perchance shall teach you where.

Gather not in sad array :
When the car is borne away,
Let no nodding plumes be there ;
Crape nor sables for me wear ;
Toll no dismal funeral bell.
Weary, she rests : it must be well !

Yet if it please you, come and strew
Over my grave a flower or two—
Fragrant thyme and rosemary,
Cowslip sweet if any be.
There muse upon my life alone :
Its faults may serve to guide your own.

Seek well therein, and if ye find
Some saving love of human-kind,
A touch of grace, a little wit,
Or any good at all in it,
Then bless me ere ye go away,
And keep my memory green a day !

THE END.

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